A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows, clubs, spears, and several kinds of trap.(1) Nets and poison are not used. Every hunter makes his own arrow-shafts and feathers; the points are made by a blacksmith. On the night before leaving for a hunt, the *ukongo* calls in his fellow hunters to share a ceremony which includes dancing and the re-anointing of the weapons with beer and palm-oil.

Communal hunts usually take place in June-July, in the middle of the dry season, when large tracts of land are covered with grass ten or more feet high. The day for the hunt is set by the village headman; spears and arrows are prepared and, when the word is given, a party of about 30 men and boys move off to the assigned area of tall grass. A ring is formed round about two square miles of land, the hunters standing just within sight of each other. The grass is trodden down, fires started, and the animals killed as they rush from the flames. Antelope of many kinds, snakes, foxes, wolves, hyenas, mice and rabbits and occasionally leopards are killed in this way.

FISHING

In the Kunene and some of the other larger rivers fish are large and plentiful, and men go on communal fishing expeditions, and return with fish to sell.(2) Men usually fish with bark lines, women use basket-traps(3) and poisons. Poison is used, usually in the dry season, when the rivers are shallow. Both men and women use nets, and sometimes a fish-weir or *olunja* may be employed; this has an opening in the middle, in the lower side of which is placed a basket-trap. At the coast and along the Kwanza river dug-out canoes, about 20-30 feet long, are sometimes used for fishing.(4)

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The principal domestic animals are the cow *(onjindi)*, ox (*ongombe*, which is also the generic name for cattle), bull *(onui)*, sheep *(omene)*, goat *(ohombo)*, pig *(ongulu)*, dog *(ombua)*, and chicken *(osanji)*.(5) The only transport animal is the ox, used both for riding and for drawing carts.(6)

Cattle are a measure of wealth, but few families own large herds. Childs lists the domestic animals in a typical village of 196 inhabitants as: 9 head of cattle, 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs, and about 100 chickens. Cattle are used for paying fines and debts, for funeral feasts, and for marriage payments. Cows are not usually milked, and cattle are killed for food only when they are aged or injured, or occasionally during the June-July period of food shortage. Treated hides are used to cover stools, and for making pouches and corn-bags.(7)

The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry

(1) Some hunters have guns, but the use of gunpowder is restricted by the Portuguese.
(2) Cashmore, op.cit., p.143.
(3) See Cashmore, loc.cit. for a brief description of the basket-trap.
(4) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.145.
(5) Ibid., pp.152-6.
(6) Childs, personal communication. Cf. Hambly, op.cit., p.152.
(7) Hambly, op.cit., p.153.

Mat-making

462 285 [412] The making of mats is a specialised craft for men. Generally elderly men are the mat-makers. Two tools are used, a borer and a needle, both products of the blacksmith's forge. Hambly[1] describes the making of reed sleeping mats, large mats used for partitions, and string bags. There are four distinct types of mats, each of which has its specialist.[2]

Leather-work

● 282 Leather pouches worn on a broad leather belt are part of the essential equipment of the hunter. The pouch is square, rectangular, or semi-cylindrical in shape, and may be decorated with cross-shaped patterns, or brass-headed nails used for decorative effect. Hide is also used for the seats of four-legged wooden stools. Hides are crudely dressed: they are soaked, the inner surface rubbed with ashes, the hair scraped away, and the hide pegged out.[3]

Wood-carving

323 [463] Wood-carving, which is men's work, includes the following specialisations: doors, windows and their frames; coffins; beds, tables and chairs; mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements; stools, household utensils, carved images etc.; drums and other musical instruments; canoes (dug-outs and coracles).[4] Illustrations are given by Hambly.[5]

TRADE

438 484 791 [682] Caravan trade is now confined to short journeys when corn, beans and beeswax are carried by men and women porters to the traders' stores. Formerly however it was an important feature of tribal life. Each caravan had its professional leader, and was accompanied by a diviner or medicine-man. Before a caravan started out, a ceremony was performed at which the principal performers were the village headman and the medicine-man. The head of the former headman was brought from its box, sewn in oxhide; blood from a sacrificed animal was sprinkled on the head, and invocation was made to the deceased by the village headman, asking for good fortune for the journey.[6]

438 436 Today the Ovimbundu exchange products among themselves both by barter and the use of Portuguese money,[7] but there are no large markets except in the towns.

[439] 438 The "trade-agreements" between the Ovimbundu kingdoms and between the Ovimbundu and other tribes have been mentioned above.[8] Accompanying these, regional industrial and commercial specialisations within Ovimbundu country developed. Thus in the middle of the last century

(1) Hambly, op.cit., pp.169-70.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.109.
(3) Hambly, op.cit., p.176.
(4) Childs, op.cit., p.110.
(5) Op.cit., Plates XIII to XXII.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.156.
(7) For details of Ovimbundu units of measurement see Hambly, op.cit., p.157.
(8) p.9.

3 Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The cow's tail is used
as a sheath for covering the iron shafts of assagais, and it is sometimes made into a switch which the rain-maker uses during his performances.

Bulls are castrated when two years old. The wound is rubbed with ashes, salt, soot, and palm oil. Bullocks are used for riding, also for pull-carts introduced by the Boers. The herd obtains most of its food by grazing. In the dry season grass withers, with the result that the animals become thin and stall-feeding is necessary. In former days cattle-raiding was a practice of the Ovimbundu, who robbed the Vacilenge. It is certain that the Ovimbundu did not own cattle when they entered Angola. If the general tradition is correct the Ovimbundu came into Angola from a northeasterly direction, from the borders of the Belgian Congo as it is called today; this is not a cattle-raising region.

The Ovimbundu of Elende have a joke against the people of Bailundu, because the latter on first seeing a cow offered the animal some food on a wooden platter. This story suggests that the Bailundu people, who are of the Ovimbundu confederacy, did not know the animal and its habits as early as did the Ovimbundu themselves.

Although the Ovimbundu do not usually kill their cattle they may do so in the months of June and July, because at this time pasture is withered and food is scarce. Animals which are diseased, aged, or injured, are killed and eaten.

The native pig is distinguishable from European breeds by its long thin snout and slender development. This breed is said by the Director of Animal Husbandry, Humpata, to be the Keltic breed (Plate LV). There is, he says, no evidence to prove that the Ovimbundu have at any time domesticated pigs from the wild hogs which are to be found in Angola. There is no family which does not own a pig, and on the whole the pig fares much better than the sheep or the goat. The pig receives water and a daily ration of food, which is usually sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some corn. Male pigs are castrated at any time between the ages of six months and one year by an operator who is a paid specialist. The fee for castrating a bull is four yards of cloth, but a small gift is considered sufficient reward for performing the operation on a pig. If a pig is thin, the leather is said to be of good quality and therefore suitable for making sheaths for knives. Usually the flesh of the pig is eaten shortly after the animal has been killed, but the meat of the bullock, on the contrary, is sometimes dried over a fire and preserved. But this is not a general practice as the animals are too valuable to be slaughtered.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

411 ment either to the arm or to the belt of the wearer. The crescent-
171 shaped expansion at the tip of the scabbard is sometimes held between the toes while the blade is withdrawn.

A small knife obtained from an Ocivokue man near Saurimo in the province of Lunda, northeast Angola, has a black wooden haft neatly bound with fine brass wire (Plate XVI, Fig. 2). The steel blade of Vachokue workmanship is eminently suitable for the purpose for which it is employed, namely, that of carving pipe bowls and snuff boxes, which are sometimes elaborately incised. The knife has a distribution from Saurimo to Cangamba, an area of intermittent Vachokue culture, but I have never observed it in the possession of an Ocimbundu. Men of the Ovimbundu have knives of somewhat poor quality. The roughly made wooden haft is attached to a blade which is protected by a sheath of lizard skin. More frequently than not, an Ocimbundu does not carry a knife; neither does he appear to have borrowed knives or the art of making them from the expert Vakuanyama or Vachokue, who are reluctant to part with their tools and weapons.

A knife used by Vasele men in the region of Vila Nova de Selles, in the hinterland of Novo Redondo, resembles one used by the Bangala of the Congo (Plate XIII, Fig. 1). The distribution of the implement, which is used for cutting branches from trees, is local in the Esele country. I have never seen such a knife in use among the Ovimbundu or in any other part of Angola. The preservation of this peculiar form, in common with other specialized traits of Esele culture, is due to isolation of the Vasele among hills difficult of access.

LEATHER WORK

282 Leather pouches worn on a broad leather belt are part of the essential equipment of a hunter. The pouch usually contains scrap
[411] metal and powder for muzzle-loading guns. This type of firearm is, under present Portuguese regulations, difficult to obtain and still more difficult to furnish with powder, which is forbidden to the native. Consequently such a pouch may contain only a pipe and tobacco.

The pouch itself is either square, rectangular, or semi-cylindrical in shape (Plate XIII, Fig. 6). The hair may or may not have been removed from the hide. Some examples show signs of careful workmanship in stamping cross-shaped patterns. Brass-headed nails are used for decorative effect on these pouches among the Ovimbundu of Elende and as far south as Huila.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbunc..

In addition to pouches, hide is used by the Ovimbundu for the seats of four-legged wooden stools. Before stretching the hide over the wooden frame the edge of the leather is cut into strips which are interlaced on the under side of the stool (Plate XVIII, Fig. 1). There are few evidences of the hide having been dressed; usually the hair is attached. The Ovimbundu understand the dressing of hides in a crude way. The hide is soaked, after which the inner surface is rubbed with ashes. The hair is scraped away and the hide is tightly pegged out. Hide was formerly used for covering wooden boxes in which a king carried his powder and possessions to war. Scraped hide is used to form the tympanum in tubular wooden drums.

In only one part of Angola, notably in the south among the Vakuanyama, is leather used as clothing. Women wear pleated skirts of hide and several broad leather belts, while the men have small leather aprons in front and behind. Men only are the leather workers. The hide is soaked and trampled under foot for many hours in order to soften it and make it pliable; the hair is not removed. Before leather clothing is worn it is thickly greased with a mixture of fat and red powder from *tukula* wood (Plates LXV, Figs. 1–3; LXVII, Fig. 1).

SPINNING AND WEAVING

My interpreter Ngonga remembers the use of a heavy upright loom about twenty years ago, but this loom is not used at the present time among the Ovimbundu. The Ovimbundu have been in contact with Europeans for three centuries. This has not been a close and permanent contact, but it has been sufficient to account for the disappearance of a one-time essential art. There are in Elende some very fine raffia palm trees, but no use is made of the leaf fiber for manufacturing clothes. Bark cloth is not made by the Ovimbundu of Elende, but I have seen the Vangangella and Ovimbundu of Ngalangi engaged in stripping, beating, and preparing bark for use as clothing, which is formed of one piece wound round the body. The bark cloth is not dyed or decorated with patterns.

Frequently at Elende men are seen engaged in spinning cotton which is used for repairs, and not for fabricating garments. The cotton is obtained from a shrub which has reddish leaves and yellow flowers. The cotton may be seen protruding from the calyx in the months of June and July. The man who is winding holds high in his left hand a slender stick which is wrapped for a length of two feet with fluffy cotton. All work of pressing and twisting the cotton into a thread is done by the thumb and index finger of the right hand.